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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4454
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION 3779
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 2290
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1294
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 0690
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 1950
RUEHPE/AMEMBASSY LIMA 5967
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO 4234
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO 2160
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC

UNCLAS SANTIAGO 000145

SIPDIS

STATE FOR R/MR, I/PP, WHA/BSC, WHA/PDA, INR/IAA

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TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [EFIN](#) [CI](#)

SUBJECT: CHILE MEDIA REPORT - FEBRUARY 19

Leading Stories

1. Chile and Bolivia scheduled a meeting of Foreign Affairs officials to lower the tension over the impasse created by Fidel Castro's endorsement of Bolivia's sea access claim and Evo Morales' subsequent remarks that he would like the international community to become involved. Dailies also report that polls conducted in the region indicate Chile is the region's best prepared country to face the international crisis.

U.S.-Related News

2. Customs figures show that the United States is again the largest recipient of Chile's exports, displacing China. In January, 19.5% of total Chilean exports went to the United States, and 15% to China (El Mercurio, conservative, influential newspaper-of-record, circ. 129,000, 2/19).

3. The American Chilean Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) reports a 7% decrease in Chilean exports to the United States in 2008. Exports to the U.S., however, have grown 125% compared to 2003. On the other hand, U.S. exports to Chile grew 51% in 2008, primarily due to petroleum oils (Estrategia, business and financial, circ. 30,000, 2/19).

4. Photo coverage of the luncheon hosted by Ambassador Simons with prominent Chileans to watch and discuss President Obama's inauguration on January 20 (Poder, monthly magazine, 2/19)

5. Money Morning from the United States placed Chile among the five most promising emerging economies in the region, noting that although it has net assets of only US\$ 112 million, it has built up a reserve equal to 12% of its GDP (El Mercurio, 2/19).

6. The United States began its conversion to digital television on February 18, which is equal in importance to the change that occurred when black and white television was replaced by color TV. A March 2007, U.S. law established that all television sets sold should include the digital standard and that stations should be airing using the digital standard (ATSC) by February 2009. The Federal Government, however, extended the deadline to June 12, since disinformation has prevented several million Americans from claiming the US\$ 40 dollar government bond to help pay for the conversion (La Tercera, conservative, independent, circ. 101,000, 2/18).

7. Editorial: "Obama's Plan" -- "In his first month of office,

President Obama has been making enormous efforts to bring confidence to the markets.... The President's words have combined hope, the kind he instilled in his campaign, with strong elements of caution. Along those lines, he has warned that things could become worse before they get better and the current trend is reversed.... The world is confident that the public policies of the Democratic regime will adjust to the needs of the global economy so that the extension of the negative stage shortens" (Estrategia, 2/19).

¶8. Editorial: "Obama's Tough First Month": "In his first thirty days in office, Obama has announced his third emergency plan..... But in spite of the President's efforts there are still no signs of progress. Dow Jones ... and the treasury bonds... have renewed their fall, showing that investors are still looking for refuge.... Obama can at least say that he has fulfilled his promise of risking everything in trying to resolve the crisis. But this has been a tough first month and there are still issues pending" (Diario Financiero, business and financial, circ. 30,000, 2/19).

Bolivia

¶9. Chilean and Bolivian Foreign Affairs Under Secretaries will meet "in the next few days" to help resolve the impasse created by Fidel Castro's endorsement of Bolivia's claim for a passage to the sea and President Evo Morales' remarks that he wants the international community to have a role in that discussion. Chile wants to persuade Bolivia to keep the claim as a bilateral issue and give assurance that the talks will continue using the mechanism of political consultations established by both countries last year (La Tercera, 2/19).

Chile and other countries

¶10. Ecuadorian Congressman Fausto Lupera asked his country's judicial authorities to issue a warrant to prevent Chilean Juan de Dios Parra from leaving Ecuador. Parra is the Director of NGO Asociacion Latinoamericana de Derechos Humanos (Aldhu), which allegedly has ties to the Colombian FARC. Following the government of Ecuador's announcement that it had annulled the agreement of immunity with the Aldhu due to these alleged ties, Parra said that he and several other members of his organization would leave the country (El Mercurio, 2/19).

SIMONS